

Message Text

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43

ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 PC-10 USIA-15 IO-14

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 AGR-20 INT-08

COME-00 DRC-01 /174 W

----- 084555

R 301116Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0778

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS LONDON 06691

AFDROUGHT

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: ROSSO FERRY

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 631

1. GREATLY APPRECIATE COMMENTS REFTEL WHICH WE PROMPTLY PASSED ALONG TO MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT (ODM). ODM CONFIRMED THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED SIMILAR REPORT FROM BRITISH RECONNAISSANCE MISSION THAT LUST RETURNED FROM AREA. BRITISH MISSION REACHED CONCLUSION THAT UNIFLOAT WAS NOT THE BEST SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT. IT SEEMS MISSION HAD A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL OBJECTIONS TO UNIFLOAT AS WELL AS RESERVATIONS ABOUT ITS SPEED. THEY RECOMMENDED INSTEAD A VESSEL CALLED THE "MEXIFLOAT" WHICH IS, WE UNDERSTAND, SOMEWHAT MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN THE UNIFLOAT AND BETTER ADAPTED TO CONDITIONS IN SENEQAL AND MAURITANIA.

2. ODM IS URGENTLY LOOKING INTO AVAILABILITY OF MEXIFLOAT WHICH IS PRODUCED IN UK AT COST ESTIMATED UNCLASSIFIED

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AT ABOUT L20,000 POUNDS. OUR CONTACT AT ODM IS OF

VIEW THAT IF MEXIFLOAT IS INDEED AVAILABLE THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET IT TO DAKAR BY SHIP IN PERIOD OF THREE WEEKS FROM WHICH POINT IT COULD BE FERRIED IN A MATTER OF DAYS TO RIVER CROSSING. AIR SHIPMENT IS STILL POSSIBILITY BUT COSTS ARE A MAJOR CONCERN AT THIS POINT.

3. ODM HOPES TO MAKE DECISION BY WEEKEND WHETHER TO BUY MEXIFLOAT, ASSUMING IT IS AVAILABLE, AND IF NOT, WHAT ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION TO BE FOLLOWED. IN MEANTIME ODM IS IN CONTACT BY TELEPHONE WITH STEVENSON OF OSRO ROME.

4. WE IMPRESSED ON ODM THE URGENCY INVOLVED AND URGED THEM TO REACH PROMPT DECISION. THEY AGREED TO INFORM US IMMEDIATELY BY TELEPHONE WHEN DECISION IS REACHED AND WE WILL REPORT PROMPTLY BY CABLE.

5. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION ABOUT ROSSO FERRY WE LEARNED THAT BRITISH RECONNAISSANCE TEAM WAS UNDER IMPRESSION FROM MAURITANIANS THAT GIRM PLACED FIRST PRIORITY ON ACQUISITION OF VEHICLES FOR TRANSPORTING GRAIN. SECOND PRIORITY IS MEANS OF MOVING COMMODITIES UP RIVER, AND THIRD PRIORITY IS IMPROVEMENT OF FERRY SERVICES.

ANNENBERG

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